



**US Agency for International Development (USAID)  
Partnership Against Corruption (PAC)  
Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE)**

**Program/Project/Activity Data**

Activity/Project Name:		<b>Partnership Against Corruption (PAC)</b>	
Assistance Objective:		DO 3: Corruption Reduced	
Program Area:		Program Element DR.1.2: Culture of Lawfulness Program Element DR.2.4: Anti-Corruption Reforms Program Element DR.2.2: Non-security Executive Authority - Function and Processes	
Country(ies) and/or Operating Unit:		USAID/N. Macedonia	
Originating Office:		GDO	Date: May 13, 2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Original RCE		Original RCE LOP Start Date: TBD	
<input type="checkbox"/> RCE Amendment		New Funding: N/A	
IEE/RCE History	DCN	LOP End Date	Total Funding (\$)
Original RCE	2022-MAC-006	2023-2028	\$12,000,000
Contract/Award Number (if known):		TBD	
<b>Sector Type(s) from the ECD Advanced Search Tab (<a href="https://ecd.usaid.gov">https://ecd.usaid.gov</a>)</b>			
Major:		Minor:	
<b>Recommended Environmental Determination (s):</b> Categorical Exclusion			
<b>Additional Elements:</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Government to Government		<input type="checkbox"/> Local Procurement	
<input type="checkbox"/> Donor Co-Funded		X Climate Change Vulnerability Analysis (included) Climate Change Vulnerability Rating: Low	

## 1. Background and Project Description

### 1.1 Purpose of the RCE

The purpose of this RCE is to make a threshold determination for the new five-year Partnership Against Corruption Activity. The United States Agency for International Development in North Macedonia (USAID/North Macedonia) seeks to contract an entity to implement its new anticorruption program.

The Request for Categorical Exclusion will cover a period of five years (the duration of the contract) and will deal with interventions that do not harm the environment in any way because they fall under training and technical assistance.

### 1.2 Project/Activity

PAC will work to strengthen national-level systems to reduce institutional vulnerabilities to corruption and for the government and other anti-corruption entities to take action to address corruption when it occurs. The program will assist the government and its entities to detect, mitigate, and prevent corruption of all forms and hold state actors accountable. To do this, the

program will support work within state entities to improve government functioning, cooperation and coordination; increase transparency in ways that decrease opportunities for corruption; and support accountability mechanisms within the purview of the government and quasi-governmental accountability mechanisms. The program will also create opportunities through diversifying anti-corruption partnerships; and exploring the use of innovative approaches, tools, and technologies.

### **Component 1: Enhanced Capacity, Integrity, and Accountability of the Public Sector to Address Corruption**

A professional and politically neutral public sector, employed through a fair and merit-based system, that acts in a legitimate, transparent and ethical, accountable and effective manner in the public interest is the essence of preventing corruption and enhancing public confidence in the system. Unfortunately, the awareness of and adherence to ethical rules and responsibilities in performing public functions is very low. Ethics and integrity are rarely in the focus of the public servants as there are no systematic requirements to understand and adhere to them. There is a need for effective mechanisms to clarify, limit and track the discretionary rights of public officials at the highest levels, especially related to the appointment of members of oversight and governing boards of state and public companies, and for the temporary employment of public officials. The Contractor must identify and advance systemic ways to strengthen the integrity and accountability of the public employees. This could include establishing a system that will mandate adherence to ethical standards; establishing clear rules to prevent conflict of interest; and introducing effective advisory, monitoring, and reporting mechanisms. Also, the contractor must find effective ways to reduce discretionary powers and support the government to increase transparency of public official appointments and employment that are based on merit.

### **Component 2: Improved Performance of Anti Corruption Institutions to Combat, Mitigate and Prevent Corruption**

In general, there is a consensus that the legal framework for combating and prevention of corruption is good and incorporates international standards, but effective implementation is lacking. Around 3/4 of the initiatives by the SCPC to relevant institutions for examining cases of corruption are rejected by those institutions, due to lack of resources, administrative backlog or lack of interest. There is no appropriate institutional follow up on the SAO's audit reports, resulting in no action on the wrongdoings findings. The Contractor will have to improve the performance of the anti-corruption institutions by improving or establishing mechanisms for effective processing of corruption cases, increasing internal oversight and transparency of the processes, and keeping the institution accountable for their actions.

### **Component 3: Decreased Opportunities for Corruption Through Digitalization and Government Processes**

Digitalization increases efficiency and accessibility in public service delivery, fast-tracking processes, reduces human contact and opportunities from corruption and ensures high transparency. The digitization process and electronic communication of institutions with citizens has started, aiming to

provide timely and efficient services, but there is an urgent need to consolidate and further support the digital transformation process, by reducing the human factor in the processes and minimizing the risk of subjective and discretionary actions, and thus reducing the risk of corruption in the public administration. For example, public procurement is identified as one of the most corrupted areas at local and national level. In spite of the E-procurement platform, the corrupt actions are evident mostly in the phase of preparing the tender documentation and specification. Very often there is only one bid from the economic operator with which the contracting party has a long-standing contract for the same procurement, due to established criteria that favor a particular economic operator. There are no standards about the tender preparation across the state institutions. The Contractor will have to identify and support the most viable digitalization solutions that will have an impact on reducing corruption and introducing preventive mechanisms, according to the government's strategies related to digitalization and information, communication and technology and the national Platform for Interoperability and Electronic Services.

Expected results:

## 2. Environmental Analysis

### Component 1 – Enhanced Capacity, Integrity, and Accountability of the Public Sector to Address Corruption

Sub-activities	Categorical Exclusion Citation
1.1 ➤ Effective systems in place to ensure that the public sector employees adhere to the ethics and integrity standards.	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]
1.2 Discretionary powers of elected and appointed officials are reduced and those that are used are done so in a transparent manner.	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]
1.3 Merit-based systems for the hiring and promotion of public sector employees strengthened.	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]
1.4 Citizens and businesses receive government services without having to use connections, pay bribes, or give gifts.	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]

### Component 2 – Improved Performance of Anti-Corruption Institutions to Combat, Mitigate and Prevent Corruption

Sub-activities	Categorical Exclusion Citation
2.1 Effective and efficient ecosystem of anti-corruption institutions timely process responses to corruption and strengthen the government's ability to mitigate opportunities to corruption.	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]
2.2 Accountability of the key institutions that fight against corruption improved.	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]

### Component 3: Decreased Opportunities for Corruption Through Digitalization and Government Processes

Sub-activities	Categorical Exclusion Citation
3.1 Perception of corruption in the public sector reduced due to enhanced digital services	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]

3.2 Efficiency of services delivery, standardization of services and accessibility of government services increased	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]
3.3 Transparency and efficiency of the public sector increased	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]
3.4 Perception of corruption in the public sector reduced due to enhanced digital services	22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii)]

2.1 Climate Change Vulnerability Analysis In accordance with [Executive Order \(EO\) 13677](#) and [Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 201 on Climate Risk Management for USAID Projects and Activities](#), it is determined that all the activities indicate low climate risk and that is unlikely climate change to significantly impact achievement of development outcomes relative to other stressors and development challenges.

### 3. Justification for Categorical Exclusion Determination

The activities under Partnership Against Corruption will not have an effect on the natural or physical environment and are among the classes of activities listed in 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2). Therefore, under §216.2(c)(1), neither an IEE nor an EA will be required for these activities. Instead, a categorical exclusion threshold determination is recommended for the following identified activities under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2):

Activity 1.1 through 1.4, 2.1 and 2.2, and 3.1 through 3.4 under §216.2(c)(2)(i) Education, technical assistance, or training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.).

### 4. Mandatory Inclusion of Requirements in Solicitations, Awards, Budgets and Workplans

- 4.1 Appropriate environmental compliance language, including limitations defined in Section 5, shall be incorporated into solicitations and awards for this activity.
- 4.2 The IP shall ensure annual work plans do not include activities that are defined as limitations, as defined in Section 5.

### 5. Limitations of the RCE: This RCE does not cover activities that:

5.1 Normally have a significant effect on the environment under §216.2(d)(1), including:

- Programs of river basin development;
- Irrigation or water management projects, including dams and impoundments;
- Agricultural land leveling;
- Drainage projects;
- Large scale agricultural mechanization;
- New lands development;
- Resettlement projects;
- Penetration road building or road improvement projects;
- Powerplants;
- Industrial plants;
- Potable water and sewerage projects other than those that are small scale.

In addition, unless the nature of the support is determined by the Resident Legal Officer or Office of General Counsel to fall under one of the defined categorical exclusions in 22 CFR §216.2(c)(2), this categorical exclusion does not cover activities that:

- 5.2 Support project preparation, project feasibility studies, engineering design for activities listed in §216.2(d)(1);
- 5.3 Affect endangered species;
- 5.4 Result in wetland or biodiversity degradation or loss;
- 5.5 Support extractive industries (e.g. mining and quarrying);

- 5.6 Promote timber harvesting;
- 5.7 Provide support for regulatory permitting;
- 5.8 Support agro-processing or industrial enterprises;
- 5.9 Result in privatization of industrial or infrastructure facilities with heavily polluted property;
- 5.10 Lead to construction, rehabilitation, or renovation of buildings or other structures;
- 5.11 Assist the procurement (including payment in kind, donations, guarantees of credit) or use (including handling, transport, fuel for transport, storage, mixing, loading, application, cleanup of spray equipment, and disposal) of pesticides or activities involving procurement, transport, use, storage, or disposal of toxic materials and /or pesticides (cover all insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, etc. covered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act); or
- 5.12 Procure or use genetically modified organisms.

Any of these actions, unless determined to qualify for a categorical exclusion under 22 CFR §216.2(c)(2), would require an IEE amendment with a Negative or Positive threshold determination approved by the Mission Director and with concurrence from the Europe and Eurasia Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO).

## 6. Revisions

- 6.1 Under §216.3(a)(9), if new information becomes available that indicates that activities covered by this RCE might be considered major and their effect significant, or if additional activities are proposed that might be considered major and their effect significant, this categorical exclusion determination will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised by the Mission Environmental Officer (MEO) with concurrence by the BEO and approval by the Mission Director. It is the responsibility of the USAID Contract Officer's Representative (COR)/Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) to keep the MEO and BEO informed of any new information or changes in the activity that might require revision of this RCE.

**7. Recommended Determination for Categorical Exclusion:****Approval:****James Stein**Digitally signed by James Stein  
Date: 2022.05.19 16:27:00 +02'00'\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Stein, Country Representative\_\_\_\_\_  
Date**Sladjana Srbinoska**Digitally signed by Sladjana Srbinoska  
Date: 2022.05.17 13:17:58 +02'00'\_\_\_\_\_  
Sladjana Srbinoska, Activity Manager/AOR/COR\_\_\_\_\_  
Date**Vasev Ivica**Digitally signed by Vasev Ivica  
Date: 2022.05.17 08:25:37  
+02'00'\_\_\_\_\_  
Ivica Vasev, Mission Environmental Officer\_\_\_\_\_  
Date**Concurrence:****POOJAN BHASKER  
TRIPATHI (affiliate)**Digitally signed by POOJAN  
BHASKER TRIPATHI (affiliate)  
Date: 2022.05.22 20:00:21  
-04'00'\_\_\_\_\_  
Poojan Tripathi, Bureau Environmental Officer  
USAID Europe and Eurasia Bureau\_\_\_\_\_  
Date**Distribution:**

- Activity File
- AOR/COR
- MEO
- BEO
- ECD

**Attachments:**

Annex A: Climate Risk Screening and Management Tool

● **Annex A: Climate Risk Screening and Management Tool**

1: Components or Sub-activities	2: Time-frame and Geography	3: Climate Risks*	4: Climate Risk Rating*	5: How Climate Risks are Addressed in the Activity*	6: Accepted Climate Risks*
Component 1 – Enhanced Capacity, Integrity, and Accountability of the Public Sector to Address Corruption	2023-2028	No direct risks are associated with this component since it is technical assistance	Low	To make sure that the technical assistance is provided to state institutions and their employee.	N/A
Component 2: Improved Performance of Anti-Corruption Institutions to Combat, Mitigate and Prevent Corruption	2023-2028	No direct risks are associated with this component since it is technical assistance	Low	To make sure that the technical assistance is provided to state institutions and their employee.	N/A
Component 3: Decreased Opportunities for Corruption Through Digitalization and Government Processes	2023-2028	No direct risks are associated with this component since it is technical assistance	Low	To make sure that the digitalization will not harm the environment in any way.	N/A

\* means a required element, according to the Mandatory Reference